

The AALAM/UWMCED Index of African American Well-Being In the Nation's 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas

Report Summary

Prepared for the African American Leadership Alliance MKE by:

Dr. Marc V. Levine
Professor Emeritus and Founding Director
UW-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development
June 2020

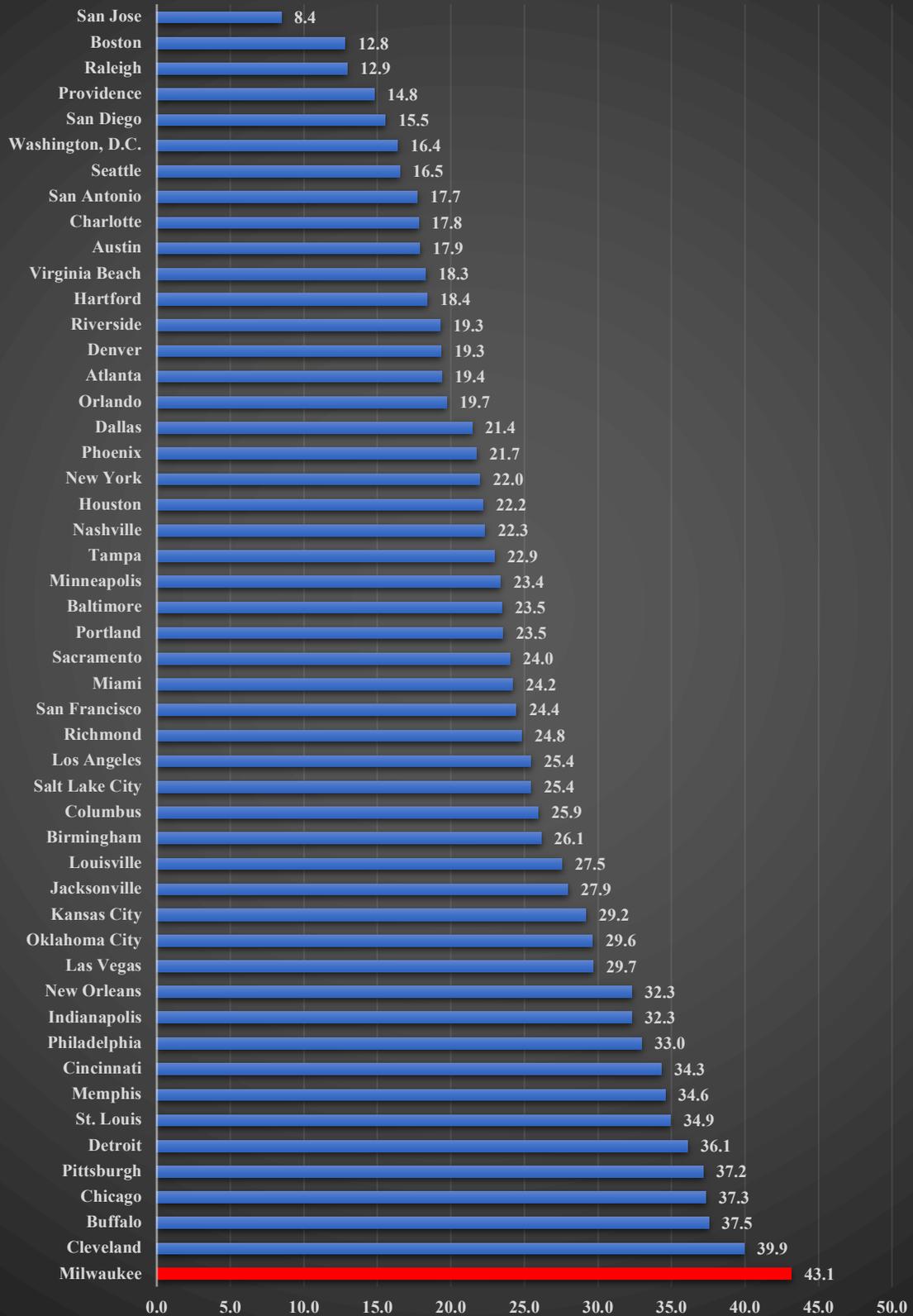
This report presents an index of African American community well-being in Milwaukee and the nation's 50 largest metropolitan areas. The index is based on Black community status for each metro area on 30 indicators of community well-being, in areas such as employment; income, poverty, and social conditions; community health; and conditions for youth and children. Ranks on all of the component indicators were then synthesized into a composite index, ranking each of the nation's largest metropolitan areas on the well-being of their respective African American communities.

The study finds that by a fairly wide margin, Milwaukee ranks worst on the composite index of African American well-being. Most striking is how far Milwaukee lags behind even other lower-ranked metro areas on the index, let alone metro areas that are in the "middle-of-the-pack" or in the "top ten." Moreover, the poor conditions in Black Milwaukee are stunningly consistent across the board. On the 30 indicators in the composite index, Black Milwaukee ranked last or next-to-last on 11 of them; it ranked in the bottom five on 19 of them; and ranked in the bottom ten among the 50 metro areas studied on all but four of the indicators. No metropolitan area approaches the consistently poor performance of Milwaukee on these measures of African American well-being. The AALAM aims "to redefine Milwaukee as a top-ranking city for African Americans by 2025." Our research reveals the magnitude of that challenge.

The study also examined what factors are associated with metro area ranking on the index African American well-being. We found two factors with modestly positive correlations with status on the composite index: Leadership (measured by the presence of African Americans in managerial or top executive positions in private industry); and

Educational Attainment (especially the fraction of the Black community holding a high school degree or equivalent). Two factors appear most strongly correlated with negative performance on the index: Segregation (high levels of Black-white residential segregation); and Poor Education (a high share of African American high school dropouts). *Correlation* is not *causation*, and further analysis would be required to identify the *drivers* of African American well-being. But these preliminary correlations suggest that reducing racial segregation; enhancing Black educational attainment; and increasing the numbers of Black managers and executives in Milwaukee companies could be potent drivers to improving overall community well-being.

Chart 1:
**Composite Index of African American Well-Being in the
Nation's Largest Metropolitan Areas**



**The State of Black Milwaukee: A Snapshot
Components of the Index of Well-Being**

Indicator	Milwaukee Value	Milwaukee Rank
Employment Rate, Young Adult Males (ages 20-24)	55.9%	41
Employment Rate, Young Adult Females (ages 20-24)	66.4%	25
Employment Rate, Prime Working Age Males (ages 25-54)	66.3%	47
Employment Rate, Prime Working Age Females (ages 25-54)	70.8%	42
Disconnected Youth (% 16-24 not in school/not employed)	25.6%	49
Median Household Income (cost of living adjusted)	\$31,052	50
% Change in Household Income (cost of living and inflation adjusted): 2010-18	-7.1%	46
Black Household Income as Percentage of White (Non-Hispanic) Income	42.0%	50
\$100,000 Annual Income HHs as Fraction of All Black Households	7.7%	49
Poverty Rate	33.4%	50
Ratio of Black Poverty Rate to White (Non-Hispanic)	4.7 to 1	49
Children's Poverty Rate	44.6%	48
Percentage Living in Extreme Poverty	14.4%	47
Percentage Living in Concentrated Poverty Neighborhoods	26.0%	47
Social Mobility of Poor Black Children: Average HH Income as Young Adults	\$21,000	44
Social Mobility of Middle-Class Children: Average HH Income as Young Adults	\$27,000	42
Black/White Young Adult Income Disparity for Children Born Poor	\$17,000	45
Black/White Young Adult Income Disparity for Children Born Middle-Class	\$20,000	47
Incarceration Rate as Young Adults for Black Males Born Poor	17.0%	50
Incarceration Rate as Young Adults for Black Males Born Middle-Class	11.0%	50
Homeownership Rate	27.4%	49
Percentage Receiving SNAP benefits	40.9%	50
Children (under 18) with no Health Insurance coverage	1.4%	6
Adults (19-64) with no Health Insurance coverage	12.6%	26
Rate of Births to Teenage Mothers	9.5%	47
Rate of Low Birth-Weight Babies	16.8%	49
Infant Mortality Rate	14.5 per 1,000	47
Mortality Rate from Heart Disease	156.9 per 100k	21
Rate of Deaths by Homicide	38.6 per 100k	41
Rate of "Deaths of Despair" (Alcohol, Drugs, Suicide)	39.6 per 100k	40